"THE STUDENT AS A FORCE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE": THE MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM SCHOOLS AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Jon Hale

"The Freedom School shaped my future, my thinking, my outlook on life, it challenged me to do the things I've done and to have the mindset that I have," Eddie James Carthan recalled about the impact of attending Freedom School in Mileston, Mississippi, during the summer of 1964. "If I had to attribute anything to my community involvement, I would attribute it to my attending the Freedom School."[1] Carthan was one of over 2,000 children and young people who attended the Freedom Schools in 1964 and cultivated their aspirations to contribute to "the Movement." Civil rights activists organized the Freedom Schools across the state of Mississippi to raise awareness about opportunities for young people to participate in the civil rights campaigns, and to mobilize and motivate youth who were not already involved. Student engagement in the Freedom Schools, the process of becoming involved in the larger movement through their educational efforts, translated into participation in protests and community organizing activities that included the demand for increased resources and better facilities in their public schools, the integration of all-white public schools, and the end of racially motivated disciplinary actions. This essay examines student motivations, and the learning processes within the Freedom Schools that translated into protest, and attempts to explain how some African American students used this education to define their approaches to political and social issues as adults. Through the analysis of student engagement in the Mississippi Freedom Schools, it becomes clear that the schools were instrumental in forging a political consciousness among African American youth in Mississippi who became committed to destroying the legalized oppression of Jim Crow segregation.

Many of these African American students became politically conscious and committed to the larger Civil Rights Movement through the knowledge and training they received at the Freedom Schools and this essay illuminates this sometimes overlooked moment of broad-based student engagement in the history of the

Jon Hale is Assistant Professor of Educational Foundations at the College of Charleston in Charleston, SC.

1960s civil rights campaigns in Mississippi. Historians Clayborne Carson, Charles Payne, John Dittmer, Neil McMillen, and others have analyzed the organized struggle for equal opportunity among "the local people" in Mississippi, a state known for its violent enforcement of legalized segregation within a highly racialized political environment.[2] Doug McAdam, Mary Ann Rothschild, and Bruce Watson have examined the "Freedom Summer" campaign, the major mobilization statewide during the summer of 1964 to register black citizens and focus attention on the civil rights violations in Mississippi, directly challenging the myth that black southerners would not vote even if provided the opportunity. The Freedom Schools, as these and other researchers have noted, were a significant part of the Freedom Summer campaign. When thousands of people organized to challenge Jim Crow practices in Mississippi in 1964, deeply entrenched racist practices were exposed and made visible throughout the world through television news programs, and the participants acquired the tools needed to carry on the struggle for racial equality. Examined from the organizers' perspectives, this literature historicizes the legacy of the grassroots mobilization in Mississippi.[3]

The historiography on the Freedom Schools has focused on education as a catalyst for social change. Daniel Perlstein examined the connection between the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's (SNCC) grassroots organizing and the internal development of the Freedom School program. Curriculum specialists George Chilcoat and Jerry Ligon discussed the curriculum and modes of instruction in the schools, and noted their significance for contemporary educational practice. Sandra Adickes published her memoir on teaching in a Freedom School, and John Rachal revealed important aspects of adult education during the Freedom Summer campaign. William Sturkey highlighted the Freedom School newspapers published by the students themselves to motivate, activate, and reinforce their connections to the larger movement. These studies explain how the Freedom Schools developed from within the Civil Rights Movement with specific curricula and instructional strategies, and highlight some of the successful student activities.[4]

The historical and educational literature demonstrates the intricacies and complexity of the black freedom movement and reveals how local people used education as one strategy in the pursuit of political, economic, and social equality. Activist educators infused the grassroots organizing tradition into the curriculum of the Freedom Schools in order to meet the need of the larger Civil Rights Movement. The children of the movement, the future generation of social change agents, experienced education for a democratic society through their engagement in Freedom School activities. Building upon the earlier scholarly foundation, this essay focuses on student engagement and utilizes the perspective and voices of

former Freedom School students to document the techniques and practices used to nurture agents of social change.

Freedom School history actually begins with the families of African American students who participated in the 1964 Freedom Summer campaign. Beyond the emphasis on how the Freedom Schools were organized, or the backgrounds of the teachers who worked there, we need to interrogate the historical and personal meaning of educational engagement that took place in the Freedom Schools. The motivation, knowledge, and engagement that characterized this educational experience often shaped not only students' work within the movement, but also their political lives and community activism later in life.

The Freedom School experience had a significant impact on the students, the teachers, and the movement at large and contributes to our understanding of the transmission of various traditions of resistance. The democratic-oriented pedagogy and citizenship training encouraged the ideals of "participatory democracy" in which young students received lessons in how to become social change agents committed to making a difference in the world.

STUDENT EXPERIENCES BEFORE FREEDOM SUMMER

Organized resistance to white supremacy, legal segregation, and anti-black violence are part of the history of the state of Mississippi. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, African Americans in Mississippi resisted Jim Crow at the local level individually through attempts to register to vote and collectively through marches and demonstrations to end racial discrimination in public accommodations. The protest campaign in the summer of 1964 was the most recent manifestation of this organized resistance in the Magnolia State.[5] Indeed, when African American children and teenagers made the decision to attend a Freedom School in their area, most were already familiar with the stories of bold resistance that preceded them. The Freedom Riders, attempting to desegregate bus terminals in the Deep South, arrived in Jackson, Mississippi, throughout the summer of 1961. These young people were likely aware of the Congress of Racial Equality's (CORE) successful campaign of nonviolent, direct action protest. James Meredith made national and international headlines when rioting erupted in Oxford over his enrollment at the University of Mississippi in September 1962. Many of the students personally knew the movement leaders and recalled personal connections that inspired their decisions to work for freedom. Years before attending the Freedom School, Arelya Mitchell, a Freedom School student in Holly Springs, met Dr. Martin Luther King with her father. Her cousin lived next door to James Meredith before he became the first African American student to attend Ole Miss. Eddie James

Carthan, a student at the Mileston Freedom School, knew Emmett Till, the 14-year-old boy from Chicago brutally murdered in Mississippi in August 1955 for allegedly whistling at a white woman.[6] Homer Hill worked for Aaron Henry, a pharmacist and organizer of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. Others were connected to the struggle through acts of terrorism and violence.[7] Hymethia Washington, a Freedom School student in Jackson, rode to church with Medgar Evers, the NAACP field secretary, the week before he was assassinated in June 1963.[8] These local events and social networks connected local Mississippians to acts of resistance within a larger freedom movement in various parts of the state.

For African American students in and around Jackson, the Freedom Rides ushered in a new era of activity. Boycotts of local white-owned businesses, school walkouts, and attempts to integrate the city zoo captured the attention of many students in the capital city. Young people in Greenville and Hattiesburg participated in voter registration drives. A small number of black students understood the movement even more intimately. Hezekiah Watkins served time in Mississippi's notorious Parchman Penitentiary at the age of fourteen due to his involvement in the demonstrations associated with the Freedom Rides. Mississippi police arrested students during a school walkout in Jackson in 1963. In one way or another, many of the young people who attended the Freedom Schools had already experienced the movement and were in a position to teach their teachers about racist terror tactics in Mississippi.

Some children, especially those in elementary school, were too young to be directly involved in the movement, and thus their first step toward participating in the struggle was attending the Freedom School. At the same time, before 1964 particularly in rural areas, there were only limited organized activities in which to participate. Indeed, in rural areas students rarely had the opportunity to attend summer school, thus the Freedom School was a welcome change from summer boredom. Thus for Ida Ruth Griffin, the Freedom School in Carthage was the only place to learn during the summer.[9] The Freedom Summer volunteers, whom the students knew as the "Freedom Fighters" or "Freedom Riders," generated great publicity, excitement, and attention. "There was something happening then. You never got bored," Ben Chaney recalled. The young students of the movement looked up to the activists as role models and many sought to emulate their activism. "My brother got involved in the freedom rides," Chaney revealed. "I thought about being a Freedom Rider. Whatever my brother wanted to do or did, I wanted to do."[10] If these children were not already involved in the movement, the network of activists who organized the Freedom Schools and moved into Mississippi would do much to spark the students' interest.



Anthony Harris, 1964, Herbert Randall Freedom Summer Photographs, McCain Library and Archives, the University of Southern Mississippi.

FREEDOM SCHOOLS AND TRADITIONS OF RESISTANCE

Attending a Freedom School connected the young people to the traditions of resistance within their families. Eddie James Carthan's father and grandfather were members of an African American farming cooperative in Mileston, where they met weekly, sometimes to discuss voter registration. Eddie Carthan attended some of these meetings as a child.[11] When Homer Hill asked to attend the Freedom School in Clarksdale, his mother gladly agreed since she had known civil rights leader Aaron Henry since childhood.[12] When Gene Young walked out of school in Jackson in protest in 1963, his first time participating in the movement, he was not fully aware of the magnitude of the social movement around him, but he was following in the footsteps of his older brothers who had become activists.[13]

Familial support or firsthand experience in movement protests did not necessarily protect the young people from experiencing violence. Participating in demonstrations and marches could be dangerous. In some places students and teachers were risking their personal safety by their involvement in the Freedom Schools. Thus the decision to send their children to the Freedom Schools was a major one for many families. Students and their families were keenly aware that the Mississippi Freedom Schools operated under the threat of intimidation, retaliation, and violence perpetuated by white supremacists.

The Freedom Summer campaign began in violence when segregationists brutally murdered James Chaney, a local African American working with CORE; Michael Schwerner, a white CORE staff member from New York; and Andrew Goodman, a white Freedom Summer volunteer who had been in Mississippi just one day. Chaney, Schwerner, and Goodman were investigating a church burning near Philadelphia, Mississippi, a small town where the local black residents had decided to let civil rights workers use their church for a Freedom School during the upcoming summer.[14] In addition to the disappearance of Schwerner, Goodman, and Chaney in June 1964 there was an increase in racial violence in Mississippi triggered by the Freedom Summer "invasion." Between June and September 1964, the period that the student volunteers were in Mississippi, local police and segregationists murdered three freedom workers, violently assaulted over eighty activists, shot at activists or their homes over thirty-five times, arrested over a thousand workers, burned thirty-five churches, and firebombed thirty-one homes and freedom houses that housed the summer volunteers.[15]

For African American families connected to the movement, in addition to the likelihood of physical retaliation, there were constant threats of economic reprisals. As Eddie James Carthan recalled, "everyone was scared to attend [civil rights] meetings because they would get fired. Teachers couldn't teach; they could get fired. Plantation owners putting folks off the plantations, the factory people would fire you."[16] Still many resisted, as in the well-known case of Fannie Lou Hamer, who was thrown off the plantation where she worked in Ruleville, Mississippi, for registering to vote. Hezekiah Watkins's mother similarly defied the system by knowingly allowing her son to participate in civil rights marches in Jackson, and this cost her a job in a white-owned restaurant.[17] Fortunately, some of the Freedom School students' families were not dependent upon white employers. Hymethia Washington's parents were economically independent, which allowed them a degree of autonomy. While her father held a position with the federal government, her mother worked with a Native American doctor who supported the movement. Hymethia's parents encouraged her to attend Freedom School on the Tougaloo College campus, an institution that strongly supported the movement.[18] Arelya Mitchell attended Freedom School because her father W. B. Mitchell actively participated in the NAACP and also enjoyed the support of Rust College, a prominent black institution in Holly Springs, Mississippi.[19] Economic considerations often entered into decisions about participating in civil rights activities.

Yet young people interested in the Freedom Schools often enrolled undeterred. "The Freedom School idea" according to the introduction to the program written by SNCC leaders, "is to train and educate people to be active agents in bringing about social change."[20] Charlie Cobb formally proposed the schools in

December 1963 and wrote in his original proposal that "the overall theme of the school would be the student as a force for social change in Mississippi." More specifically, the Freedom Schools were to "form the basis for statewide student action such as school boycotts, based on their increased awareness."[21] "Student action" was oftentimes guided toward voter registration projects in the community. "The Freedom Schools stand as an integral part of voter registration activities," a Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) Freedom Summer pamphlet noted, "[and] they will provide politically emerging communities with new young leadership, and constitute a real attack on the presently stifling system of education existing in the State. By the end of the summer, the basis will have been laid for a cadre of student leadership around the State of Mississippi committed to critical thinking and social action."[22] To achieve this goal, Freedom School organizers Charlie Cobb, Bob Moses, and Staughton Lynd instructed teachers to provide the pedagogical means for activism. The informational memorandum written by movement veterans sent to potential teachers declared "The purpose of the Freedom School is to help [students] begin to question . . . [and] to provide an educational experience for students which will make it possible for them to challenge the myths of our society, to perceive more clearly its realties, and to find alternatives and, ultimately, new directions for action."[23] When organizers presented the opportunity to attend a Freedom School, the idea of organizing for social change was not necessarily new to many of these students.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AT THE FREEDOM SCHOOLS

The Freedom Schools followed in the grassroots organizing tradition associated with Ella Baker, the revered and wise mentor of SNCC, and the "education for citizenship" programs organized by Septima Clark. The "Citizenship Schools" were the widely popular adult education program that was teaching disenfranchised adults the literacy tools needed to register to vote.[24] This form of education also built upon the experiential knowledge about education for social change adopted by civil rights organizers, and indeed, others across the country who equated education with political liberation and freedom. Education was an instrumental part in the long history of struggle for political, economic, and social equality.[25] Thus the original aspect of the Freedom Schools was the fact that organizers targeted elementary and secondary school students, whereas the work inspired by Ella Baker, Septima Clark, and others focused on the adult population.

A culturally relevant curriculum and teaching methods that incorporated the students' interests were used to directly engage the Freedom School students. To meet the goals of teaching for active citizenship, the organizers developed and

implemented a curriculum that focused upon the ideal of "participatory citizenship," a sense of citizenship gained through active participation in the political processes at the local, state, and national levels to achieve political, social, and economic equality for all people. Curriculum specialists George Chilcoat and Jerry Ligon examined the ideas of democratic citizenship that were the foundation of the Freedom School curriculum, and the students were presented with information about what it meant to be a citizen in a Jim Crow society. The citizenship curriculum consisted of seven units of study and included a comparison of southern and northern culture and politics, focusing on the experiences of whites and African Americans; the analysis of the "power structure" in American society and its impact on African Americans and poor whites; a critique of "materialism" in a unit devoted to "material things versus soul things"; and an analysis of the goals and strategies of the Civil Rights Movement.[26] In addition to these curricular units, other issues were addressed, including leadership development, events in the contemporary freedom struggle, and extracurricular activities.[27] Extracurricular courses and activities included dance, drama, art and music appreciation, foreign languages, and typing.[28]

Freedom School students also studied African American history and literature, which were not part of the regular public school curriculum. "We were introduced to black authors who we didn't know anything about at the time," Thelma Eubanks, a Freedom School student in McComb, recalled. "Richard Wright and James Baldwin . . . I also remember *Freedom Road* by Howard Fast and *Strange Fruit* by Lillian Smith. We hadn't had any of that at school."[29] African American culture was appreciated and displayed proudly at the Freedom Schools. The Freedom School teachers "put a library in the school and many of the books were on black history," Homer Hill recalled of the Freedom School in Clarksdale, including "Richard Wright . . . Langston Hughes, Frederick Douglass' writings, [and] a wide range of books [and] plays."[30] The Freedom School teachers taught and assigned authors who articulated what it meant to be African American in the United States. Culturally relevant sources assisted teachers in challenging notions of citizenship in a racialized society.

Arelya Mitchell, who attended Freedom School in Holly Springs, recalled that it was there that she "became aware, even more aware, of the color issue." Mitchell learned from a civil rights worker that most whites thought that "blacks were supposed to be inferior and of course I didn't even know what that word was . . . so, I'm saying, inferior, what are you talking about?"[31] The Freedom Schools provided a pedagogical space for students to interrogate racist myths and to articulate the meaning of citizenship under the existing Jim Crow system and under the terms of the U.S. Constitution. The students explored the nature of race relations in the North and the South, which was not explicitly taught in the public schools.

The curriculum encouraged students to think critically about citizenship and the functioning of the U.S. government. The history of African Americans and the Civil Rights Movement introduced students to potential solutions for the problems of legal segregation and economic inequality. Arelya Mitchell and other students discussed, contemplated, and articulated the meanings of "the color issue," or being black in a society committed to white supremacy. In order for the Jim Crow system to succeed, it required passive acceptance of the social norms and racial practices; however, in the Freedom Schools the students openly and actively challenged the bases for segregationist ideology and articulated egalitarian notions of citizenship.[32]



The Locations of the Forty-one Mississippi Freedom Schools, 1964[33]

LEARNING ABOUT FREEDOM INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

In addition to a culturally relevant and engaging curriculum, another reason for the success of the Freedom School curriculum was that the pedagogy stood in

stark contrast to traditional public schooling. Liz Fusco, a Freedom School teacher and later coordinator after the summer campaign, reported that in Mississippi's public schools, African American students learned "to be alert to what the authority wants, which is always a fact you can memorize. So you learn to copy, you learn not to think, you learn not to ask a question that you don't already know the answer to or that you're not sure she [the teacher] knows the answer to."[34] Civil rights organizers and educators had come to realize that this form of instruction failed to engage the students or encourage them to confront larger social issues.[35] If the Freedom Schools were to be an effective catalyst for change, the organizers believed, then education for freedom would have to be presented in a way that was engaging and directly relevant to the students' lives in the local community.

Freedom School teachers creatively engaged the students in the learning process. The students were the center of instruction, discussion, and debate around topics relevant to their lives and education. They began the school day by singing "freedom songs" such as "We Shall Overcome," or "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize." Rather than regularly assigned seating, students sat where they chose and in a way that facilitated dialogue. Students and teachers earnestly discussed issues and questions related to the civil rights campaigns such as: "Why are we (students and teachers) in Freedom Schools? What is the freedom movement? What alternatives does the freedom movement offer us?"[36] The Freedom School students actively participated in the courses offered and in many instances they were given an opportunity to role-play, dramatize, and reenact the lessons they learned. Concepts of freedom and citizenship rights were illustrated through reenactments and dramatizations of the experiences of martyred activists such as Herbert Lee, a civil rights organizer slain in Liberty in 1961; and Medgar Evers, the NAACP field secretary killed in his driveway in Jackson in June 1963.[37] Ultimately, these activities and discussions allowed the "students to articulate the desire for change awakened by the questions they were empowered to ask."[38] Students embodied democratic citizenship by connecting this type of participatory democracy within the classroom to notions of civic participation in the larger community. In other words, students were engaged in the learning process through a student-centered pedagogy, and were primed to take part fully in the political processes in their communities.

One of the most engaging aspects of attending a Freedom School was the likelihood of active participation in protests, demonstrations, and boycotts organized by local movement leaders. Protests and demonstrations were unconventional learning spaces for students and the older Freedom School students engaged in them wholeheartedly. The students in Wally Roberts's Freedom School class in Ruleville, Mississippi, told him, "What we want you to do is to help us become Freedom Fighters. We want to go on picket lines and do protests. Teach us how to

do that."[39] Freedom School students learned *how* to participate in the nonviolent, direct action protests and thus the learning process extended far beyond the classroom, while students simultaneously were demanding to become "freedom fighters." In fact, many civil rights activists knew the Freedom Schools were not only a place for citizenship training, but also a site for learning the nonviolent tactics used in the movement. The philosophy and techniques of nonviolence became part of the curriculum. "We would go to meetings and we would talk about how to be nonviolent," Hymethia Washington recalled. "The boys were taught how to protect the girls from being kicked in the abdomen because that would keep us from producing children. We were taught those kinds of things. We just couldn't get out and demonstrate, we had to first of all be taught."[40] Freedom School activities did not have to occur within traditional educational boundaries. Since the "school" was located in a space designated by the local community, Freedom School education could take place anywhere and anytime as needed.

While the Freedom Schools taught nonviolent tactics, the movement provided the opportunities to apply them. These students were still too young to register to vote, which was a major priority of the Freedom Summer campaign, but the older middle or high school students could participate in demonstrations. The 1964 Civil Rights Act outlawed racial segregation in public accommodations and this presented Mississippi students the opportunity to test the law. One well-known incident occurred in Hattiesburg, the "Mecca of the Freedom Schools," where Sandra Adickes led a group of six students to get library cards at the local public library. The library staff refused them service, so they walked across the street to the Kress Department Store, where she and her African American students were denied service. The police were called and Adickes was arrested and charged with vagrancy. Subsequently, the students from another local Freedom School tried to integrate the same library and the Hattiesburg police arrested the four teachers who led this attempt.[41] Students in Indianola participated in sit-ins to desegregate the public library and a local restaurant; and in Cleveland, Mississippi, African American students organized a picket line and distributed leaflets about voter registration near the courthouse and they were arrested.[42] In Ruleville, a crowd of segregationists fired shots at a group of Freedom School students who attempted to obtain service at a local restaurant.[43] In these and other dangerous moments, the students endured the cost of "freedom" alongside the adults.

For most students, however, participation in civil rights activities took the form of behind-the-scenes community organizing. "Canvassing," Eddie James Carthan recalled, "was tough work. . . . We'd have certain days we'd go out and canvass all day." Carthan spoke at length about canvassing, one of the common experiences during the Freedom Summer campaign, which consisted of the slow and patient work of going door to door to talk to neighbors about the opportunity

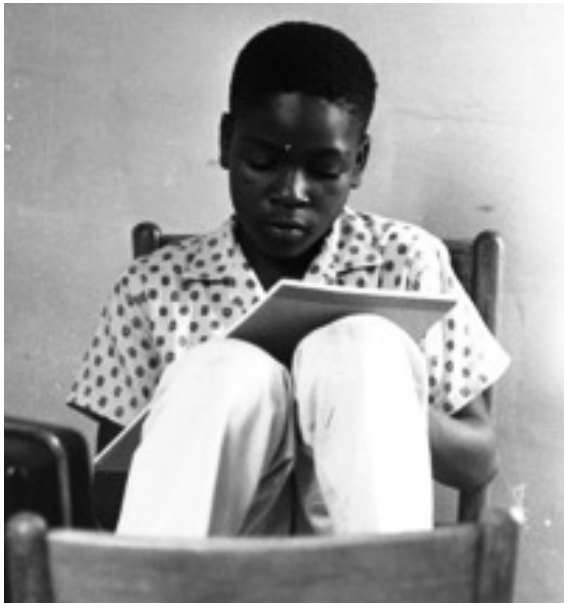
to participate in the movement by registering to vote or attending an upcoming mass meeting. Carthan and other students canvassed people living on the plantations and in the hills outside the Delta town of Mileston in an attempt to convince them to register to vote. Carthan recalled that they encountered "some of the poorest [living] conditions that I have ever seen in my life. . . . It was quite an experience to see how my folk were living and suffering, but through it all they survived."[44]

Freedom School teachers and students helped register voters in the "Freedom Vote" campaign, and took part in the mobilization organized by members of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) who sought to unseat the state's all-white delegation at the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City in August 1964. To assist in this effort, Freedom School teachers across the state distributed registration forms and instructed students on how to fill them out so they could help register their parents and other family members.[45] Toward the end of July, a Freedom School teacher in Clarksdale reported that teachers were "starting a full scale program of getting the students active in the Freedom Registration. . . . [W]e are having the full staff go out with the students in order to free regular voter registration workers to go out into the county."[46] The students were thus engaged inside and outside the classroom where they learned about the harsh reality, but promising future of citizenship in Mississippi.

Freedom School students were provided new and different experiences during the summer of 1964. "So much for little league baseball," Dr. Gene Young recalled. "I had teachers and knew people who had never been out of Mississippi, had never been to New York, and then a few months later, [I was in] Washington, DC [and New York]." At the age of twelve, Gene Young became a popular advocate for civil rights in Mississippi and became known for his speeches at rallies. Civil rights organizers even invited Young to New York City to speak at fundraisers where he met comedian Dick Gregory, singer Frank Sinatra, and other celebrities.[47] Hezekiah Watkins, who was arrested for his civil rights activism at the age of fourteen, became another young celebrity of the movement in Mississippi. Watkins was placed in charge of directing the civil rights volunteers arriving in the state.[48]

Using donated mimeograph machines, the Freedom School students across the state printed their own newspapers to disseminate news about the movement. This turned out to be a very popular activity. The Meridian *Freedom Star*, the *Benton County Freedom Train*, the McComb *Freedom's Journal*, and other student newspapers were used to politicize the young people and adults, circulating their ideas about the nature of "freedom," articulating their disdain for the Jim Crow laws, and encouraging their readers to join the movement.[49] Arelya Mitchell's first article, published in the Holly Springs Freedom School newspaper,

was a critical editorial about the Holly Springs mayor Sam Coopwood. Mitchell found working on the newspaper liberating and she eventually went on to start her own newspaper in Memphis, Tennessee.[50]



A Freedom School Student, 1964 Herbert Randall Freedom Summer Photographs, McCain Library and Archives, the University of Southern Mississippi.

By the end of the summer of 1964, over 2,000 students attended the Freedom Schools, and those who participated felt they were engaged in the democratic process and they wanted their voices to be heard. The Freedom School teachers viewed their students as youthful beacons of hope and inspiration, actively pursuing education as a path to freedom. And since most of the Freedom School teachers were whites, it is no surprise that a particular lasting effect and recurring theme about Freedom Summer among former Freedom School students were the personal contacts they had with whites for the first time. "We lived across the street from the COFO office, right down in the heart of town [Meridian]," Larry Martin recalled, when the white freedom fighters arrived in their town. "One day we saw those white guys going up those stairs. They looked different, not like the ones you'd see around here all the time. . . . We'd go to the COFO office every day and stay until night. They let us stay and play as long as we wanted to. . . . I wanted to be in the demonstrations. I wanted to be a part of it."[51] Ben Chaney also recalled what these scenes were like.

> We would sit around on the floor in a group and everybody would sing. There was always a discussion going on. Mostly adults would talk about voter registration, and what was happening. They talked about the latest attack, who got whupped recently by the racists. And we were listening.[52]

For white activists, working for civil rights in Mississippi meant living with African Americans who opened their homes to the volunteers for the summer. Most of the Freedom School students and local organizers were very familiar with life in rural Mississippi; the majority of the white volunteers, however, were not. Many of the Freedom School teachers came from upper middle-class backgrounds and took for granted certain economic and social privileges. The Freedom School teachers came from families whose average annual income was $8,417, nearly 50 percent higher than the national average, while students attending Freedom Schools came from families that made an average of $1,200 a year.[53] The volunteers lived with black families that traced their heritage to the era of slavery and were oppressed and exploited by past and present realities of Jim Crow segregation.

While living in these Mississippi communities, the volunteers learned what it meant to live under the system of Jim Crow. Wally Roberts from the suburbs of New York City recalled, "We met a lot of bright kids and met kids who had just been beat down by poverty, and I think that was the big culture shock for me in terms of seeing how bad the living conditions and the poverty were in Mississippi, it had just blew me away, I had never seen it up close before . . . and what we saw was just devastating and . . . that was a culture shock."[54] This type of exposure created the conditions for a very profound learning experience. In many ways the Freedom School teachers learned as much from the students as the students could learn from them, and it was a position these activist teachers came to appreciate. "Living in [the Clarksdale] community, even though I only was there about six or seven weeks, I would say that it had a profound effect on me," Freedom School teacher Sandy Siegel recalled. "It was like a privilege for me to have been there for that time and live with people who had to go through what the blacks of Mississippi had to go through . . . [I]t really kind of turned my world upside down, it made me feel differently about the world that I live in, the values that I had."[55] Working in the Freedom Schools allowed the volunteer teachers to experience the realities of the African American struggle for freedom.

SUSTAINING STUDENT ACTIVISM AFTER FREEDOM SUMMER

Freedom Summer volunteers organized the Freedom Schools in coordination with the voter registration campaigns that culminated with the events at the Democratic convention in Atlantic City in August 1964 and the nominations of

Lyndon B. Johnson and Hubert H. Humphrey for president and vice president. The politics of trying to seat the MFDP delegation at the convention served as the dramatic conclusion to the summer mobilization. The unsuccessful outcome in Atlantic City also precipitated an ideological turning point in SNCC's philosophy, and a shift in the goals and strategies of the civil rights organization.[56] Following the dispiriting rebuffs by the Johnson administration, many civil rights workers were physically exhausted and disillusioned politically. While it appeared that the Mississippi movement suffered major losses after the Freedom Summer campaign, between the summer of 1964 and the summer of 1965, Freedom School students became much more directly involved in influencing local educational policies and practices, and they energized and sustained the movement at the local level.

Freedom School students became very active in desegregating public schools across the state in the 1964–1965 school year. The Fifth Circuit Federal Court ordered the desegregation of the public school systems in Jackson, Biloxi, Clarksdale, and Leake County in the fall of 1964, but beginning with the first grade only.[57] The Freedom School students in Jackson became very much involved in the registration of African American students for the first grade, and Freedom School teacher Florence Howe and her student-volunteers canvassed various neighborhoods to get parents to register their children. They met with more than seventy families and subsequently boasted that they assisted eleven of the forty-three black students to register in previously all-white public schools in Jackson.[58]

In defiance of the court's "stair-step plan," which called for the desegregation of all-white (or all-black) public schools only one grade a year, former Freedom School students engaged in attempts to desegregate all-white high schools in several locations. In the fall of 1964, nineteen African American students attempted to register at high schools in Canton; over twenty black students with the guidance and support of COFO leaders attempted to integrate all-white public schools in Meridian; and twenty-two students attempted to integrate Jackson's all-white high schools. Ben Chaney and other former Freedom School students tried to desegregate all-white schools in districts that were not subject to the federal court order. These actions caught police and public officials off guard, but school authorities blocked the student activists' attempts to enroll at these schools and refused to allow them to be registered.[59]

The most common form of student protest to emerge among Freedom School students in Mississippi was to launch boycotts of the all-black public schools. "I remember walking out of Brinkley High School," Hymethia Washington recalled of a student protest in Jackson. "We were taken to the fairgrounds down there until our parents came and got us." The Mississippi police "wanted our par-

ents to force us to sign a statement saying we would never participate in any more demonstrations."[60] Hezekiah Watkins described his response to the school walkout.

> Don't ask me how we were able to do this without transportation or phones, but we organized a walkout. We were able to organize the three high schools and at noon we were going to walk out and we did this within less than a week and the word, man, just traveled just like a wildfire. I'm told that we had 90 percent of the student body walk out of the school and we walked down the highway for a minute, some of us were arrested and some of us weren't, each school did not know what the other school was going to do. The only thing they knew was we talked about it, and everybody said we're going to do this and you're concerned with your school, and I'm concerned with mine, the other person was concerned with his. . . . But it happened and we made history that day.[61]

The school protest described by Washington and Watkins was a model for boycotts that occurred following the Freedom Summer campaign. Students across the state boycotted public schools to demand better resources, or to protest unfair educational policies or racially motivated disciplinary practices. One of the first boycotts occurred in early August 1964, which set the tone for student activity during the entire school year. The Mississippi Student Union (MSU), a nascent student-led organization designed to carry out the struggle in the public schools, formed a partnership with adults and organized the Bolivar (County) Improvement Association. When the students asked white volunteers to attend a meeting at Shaw's all-black McEvans High School, the African American principal asked them to leave since they did not have permission from the white superintendent to attend. As a result, the students launched a boycott and demanded better resources for their school. The boycott was 75 percent effective, and during the boycott, students attended the Shaw Freedom School after McEvans High School was closed and guarded by armed deputies. The next major boycott occurred in Sharkey and Issaquena Counties, which was instigated in January 1965. The protest was sparked by about 400 students at the Henry Weathers High School wearing SNCC pins to highlight their participation in the Civil Rights Movement. When the students refused to take off the pins, the principal, following the instructions of the all-white school board, expelled them. Over 300 students decided to join the boycott, and during the protest the students attended Freedom Schools.[62]

The Issaquena and Sharkey counties' boycott inspired other protests across the state. In Indianola, Mississippi, black students boycotted the public schools in support of the Sharkey and Issaquena County students. Up to 2,000 students stayed home in Indianola, demonstrating their commitment to MSU's position that "Negroes are fed up with inferior schools, extreme brutality by the police, and similar discrimination. We're doing something about it." Police brutality accom-

panied the arrest of fifty-three student protesters in Indianola where the police used billy-clubs and cattle prods to break up the demonstration.[63] Across the state, politically conscious students compared stories of resistance and civil disobedience. Forty-five students in Philadelphia, Mississippi, were suspended for wearing SNCC's "One Man, One Vote" buttons in school. Students in Rolling Fork, Mississippi, were also sent home for wearing "freedom pins." After black students in Panola County petitioned the school board for improvements in school facilities there, they threatened a boycott if their demands were not met. Students across the state mounted other protests collectively and individually: in Valley View, a protest was organized over the firing of an African American bus driver; a principal in Jackson expelled a student for singing a freedom song; in Holmes County, a principal expelled two students for singing freedom songs; and in Starkville, a principal expelled a student for distributing an MSU petition.[64]

"Freedom Schooling" became a portable concept and students embodied the principles and methods of the Freedom Schools and acted on their own after Freedom Summer. Students were not just educated to work in the civil rights campaigns, but they organized among themselves and demanded social and educational change.

THE ENDURING LEGACY OF THE FREEDOM SCHOOLS

For African American students in Mississippi who observed their friends, families, and civil rights leaders challenging the system of Jim Crow segregation, organizing protests to desegregate public schools and for better resources allowed these young people to make their own contributions to the struggle. The Freedom School students continued traditions of resistance and demonstrated their commitment individually and collectively to the concept of equality of educational opportunity. At the same time, many became convinced that attending college was also a civil right and through their activism they were provided the opportunity to pursue higher education. Hezekiah Watkins declared, [Through my work in the freedom movement] I had an opportunity to go on and get my college education." Many of the volunteers connected the African American students to universities in the North. Watkins attended Southern Illinois University at Carbondale: "I had an opportunity that most didn't have in terms of going to college . . . [and] had my tuition paid for."[65]

Hymethia Washington received a teaching degree at Jackson State University in Mississippi and she remained committed to the principles of integration. She eventually moved to Racine, Wisconsin, where she is the only African American faculty member in the English Department at Washington Park High School. Homer Hill entered the military service and eventually earned his M.A. degree in

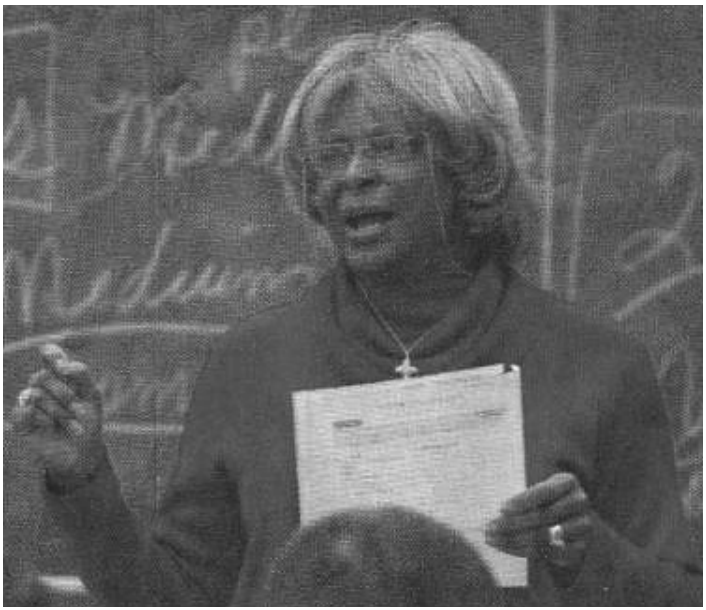
history from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1995. Gene Young gained local notoriety as a "child in the movement" and eventually returned to Mississippi after he received his Ph.D. degree in higher education and administration from the University of Connecticut in the 1970s.[66]

The legacy of the Freedom Schools is also evident in the activism and professional careers of former students who later assumed positions of influence and prominence within their communities. Eddie James Carthan maintained a strong commitment to the Mississippi freedom movement and in 1977 was elected mayor of the Delta town of Tchula. When Carthan tried to reform real estate policies and promote equitable housing practices in this town, white state officials fabricated charges against him and six others and had them arrested; they soon became known as the "Tchula Seven." During his imprisonment Carthan remained committed to challenging the unfair legal practices used to justify his and the others' incarceration. After a nationally and internationally organized campaign, the Tchula Seven were released in 1982.[67]

"The Freedom School was a great success for blacks in getting a better education," Ida Ruth Griffin O'Leary declared, "and the Freedom Schools made it better for the children to come."[68] O'Leary commented about the increased educational opportunity, but she was specifically referring to the Head Start program, which began operating in the summer of 1965. Head Start was a federally funded program that local activists used to continue the struggle for equality by providing an education to children about to enter the first grade. O'Leary currently works at the Head Start program in Carthage, Mississippi, which is now named after a local Freedom Movement veteran, Winston Hudson.[69] Marion Wright Edelman was a civil rights activist in Mississippi and in 1963 became the first African American admitted to the Mississippi State Bar. In 1973 Edelman established the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) and in 1995 she launched the CDF Freedom School program, a summer enrichment program across the country. The CDF Freedom Schools have reached more than 70,000 students and their families in sixty-one cities in twenty-four states. The schools are committed to providing high quality enrichment, promoting family involvement and civic engagement, developing intergenerational servant leadership, and providing physical and mental health services.[70] Overall, the opportunities for student engagement have been institutionalized on a national level through the CDF Freedom School program and in school districts that have adopted the name and ideas behind the Freedom Schools.[71]

Many students continue to benefit directly or indirectly from the precedents established by the Freedom Schools. As Hymethia Washington recalled, "the Freedom Schools instilled in us some things that we didn't get in the regular classroom . . . the Freedom Schools allowed us to believe that we could rise above

whatever situation that seemed to have been negative, but we were inspired to work harder and go extra time or whatever to try and catch up, even if we didn't have the supplies or the books, we knew that we could make it."[72] Freedom School students were unafraid to challenge Jim Crow, even when they saw their parents lose their jobs because of their involvement in the movement. And when their parents got other jobs, they learned that segregationists no longer controlled their lives. The Freedom School students also learned that they could challenge the practices that their parents' generation viewed as unchangeable and fixed, and that even as students, they could challenge the structural inequities in Mississippi society.



Dr. Hymethia Washington Thompson at Park High School. Courtesy of the *Racine* (Wisconsin) *Journal Times*.

The African American students learned what freedom meant and they lived their lives in accordance with those principles. As adults, they recalled fondly the experience of attending Freedom School and its profound influence on their lives and came to understand the important role of education in the Civil Rights Movement and the liberating role of education in bringing about social, political, and economic change. "I became very familiar with the lessons we learned from being involved in those Freedom Schools," Dr. Hymethia Washington Thompson recalled, "so I look back. I never let it go."[73] Eddie James Carthan recalled, "If I had to attribute anything to my community involvement, I would attribute it to my

attending the Freedom School."[74] And Homer Hill declared, "It wasn't until much later that I appreciated how important those schools were . . .I carry that experience to this very day . . . [attending the Freedom School] was like shining a very bright light into a very dark place for a time and it just changed my perception about many things for the rest of my life."[75]

NOTES

[1]Eddie James Carthan, interview with the author, 5 September 2008, Tchula, MS.

[2]James W. Silver, *Mississippi: The Closed Society* (New York, 1964); Charles Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley, CA, 1996); Neil McMillen, *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow* (Urbana, IL, 1989); John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana, IL, 1994); Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA, 1981).

[3]Doug McAdam, *Freedom Summer* (New York, 1988); Bruce Watson, *Freedom Summer: The Savage Season That Made Mississippi Burn and Made America a Democracy* (New York, 2010); Sally Belfrage, *Freedom Summer* (Charlottesville, VA, 1965); Roberto M. Fernandez and Doug McAdam, "Social Networks and Social Movements: Multiorganizational Fields and Recruitment to Mississippi Freedom Summer," *Sociological Forum* 3 (Summer 1988): 378–382; Mary Aicken Rothschild, *A Case of Black and White: Northern Volunteers and the Southern Freedom Summers, 1964–1965* (Westport, CT, 1982), 33–35, 44; and "The Volunteers and the Freedom Schools: Education for Social Change in Mississippi," *History of Education Quarterly* 22 (Winter 1982): 401–420; Elizabeth Sutherland, ed., *Letters From Mississippi* (Brookline, MA, 2002); Carson, *In Struggle*; Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*; McMillen, *Dark Journey*; Dittmer, *Local People;* Silver, *Mississippi: The Closed Society*.

[4]Daniel Perlstein, "Teaching Freedom: SNCC and the Creation of the Mississippi Freedom Schools," *History of Education Quarterly* 30 (Autumn 1990): 297–324; Charles M. Payne, "More Than a Symbol of Freedom: Education for Liberation and Democracy," *Phi Delta Kappan* 85 (January 2003): 22–28; Charles M. Payne, "Education for Activism: Mississippi's Freedom Schools in the 1960s," paper presented at the American Educational Research Association annual conference, April 1997; George Chilcoat and Jerry A. Ligon, "Discussion as a Means for Transformative Change: Social Studies Lessons from the Mississippi Freedom Schools," *Social Studies* 92 (September–October 2001): 213; George Chilcoat and Jerry A. Ligon, "'We Talk Here. This Is a School for Talking.' Participatory Democracy from the Classroom Out into the Community: How Discussion Was Used in the Mississippi Freedom Schools," *Curriculum Inquiry* 28 (Summer 1998): 165–193; George Chilcoat and Jerry A. Ligon, "Theatre as an Emancipatory Tool: Classroom Drama in the Mississippi Freedom Schools," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 29 (September 1998): 515–543; George Chilcoat and Jerry A. Ligon, "Helping to Make Democracy a Living Reality," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 15 (Fall 1999): 43–68; Sandra Adickes, *Legacy of a Freedom School* (New York, 2005); William Sturkey, "'I Want to Become a Part of History': Freedom Summer, Freedom Schools, and the *Freedom News,*" *The Journal of African American History* 95 (Summer–Fall 2010): 348–368; LaKersha L. Smith, "Telling Their Side of the Story: Mississippi Freedom Schools, African-Centered Schools and the Educational Development of Black Students," Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 2007; John Rachal, "We'll Never Turn Back: Adult Education and the Struggle for Citizenship in Mississippi's Freedom Summer," *American Educational Research Journal* 35 (Summer 1998): 167–198; Judith Collins Hudson, "Freedom Teachers: Northern White Women Teaching in Southern Black Communities, 1860s and 1960s," Ph.D. diss., University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2001; Harold F. Smith, "'The Thoughts of Being Free Has Entered Many Minds': The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Process of Community Education, 1960–1966," Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2000; Peatchola Jones-Cole, "Mississippi Freedom Schools: A Response Strategy to the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi," Ph.D. diss., University of Memphis, 2007; Daniel Peter Hinman-Smith, "'Does the Word Freedom Have a Meaning?' The Mississippi Freedom Schools, the Berkeley Free Speech Movement, and the Search for Freedom through Education," Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1993.

[5]For the history of black resistance in Mississippi, Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*; McMillen, *Dark Journey*; Dittmer, *Local People*. For extensive histories of the Freedom Summer campaign of 1964, see McAdam, *Freedom Summer*; Watson, *Freedom Summer.*

[6]For a full account of the story of Emmet Till, see Mamie Till-Mobley and Christopher Benson, *Death of Innocence: The Story of the Hate Crime That Changed America* (New York, 2003).
[7]Eddie James Carthan, interview with the author, 5 September 2008, Tchula, MS; Arelya Mitchell, phone interview with the author, 2 September 2008; Homer Hill, phone interview with the author, 24 June 2008.
[8]Mrs. Hymethia Washington Thompson, phone interview with the author, 26 August 2008.
[9]Ida Ruth Griffin O'Leary, phone interview with the author, 4 September 2008.
[10]Ellen Levine, *Freedom's Children: Young Civil Rights Activists Tell Their Own Stories* (New York, 1993), 102.
[11]Carthan interview.
[12]Homer Hill, phone interview with the author, 24 June 2008.
[13]Dr. Gene Young, interview with the author, 7 August 2008, Jackson, MS.
[14]Seth Cagin and Philip Dray, *We Are Not Afraid: The Story of Goodman, Schwerner, and Chaney, and the Civil Rights Campaign for Mississippi* (1998; reprinted New York, 2006); Dittmer, *Local People*, 246–252; Levine, *Freedom's Children*, 92–115; Watson, *Freedom Summer*, 77–104.
[15]Neil McMillen, "Development of Civil Rights, 1956–1970," in *A History of Mississippi,* ed. Richard Aubrey McLemore (Hattiesburg, MS, 1973), 168; Len Holt, *The Summer That Didn't End* (New York, 1965), 207–252; McAdam, *Freedom Summer*; "Schwerner, Chaney, and Goodman File," Freedom Information Service Library, Jackson, MS (hereafter, FIS).
[16]Carthan interview.
[17]Hezekiah Watkins, interview with the author, 26 and 27 August 2008, Jackson, MS.
[18]Hymethia Washington Thompson, phone interview with the author, 26 August 2008.
[19]Arelya Mitchell, phone interview with the author, 2 September 2008.
[20]"Freedom Schools, Day, Noel, 1964," subgroup d, appendix a, reel 67, file 342, SNCC Papers, History, Philosophy, and Newspaper Library at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, IL (hereafter, SNCC Papers); "Freedom Schools, Curriculum, general," subgroup d, appendix a, reel 67.340, SNCC Papers.
[21]Ibid.
[22]"Freedom Schools, Curriculum, general," subgroup d, appendix a, reel 67.340.994, SNCC Papers.
[23]"Freedom Schools, Curriculum, general," subgroup e, appendix a, reel 67.340,1032 and 1114, SNCC Papers.
[24]Katherine Charron, *Freedom's Teacher: The Life of Septima Clark* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2009); Septima Clark and Poinsette and Cynthia Stokes Brown, *Ready from Within: Septima Clark and the Civil Rights Movement* (Trenton, NJ, 1990); Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2003).
[25]See also Constance Curry, *Silver Rights* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1995); Vanessa Siddle Walker, *Their Highest Potential: An African American Community in the Segregated South* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1996); Chana Kai Lei, "Anger, Memory, and Personal Power: Fannie Lou Hamer and Civil Rights Leadership," in *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement,* ed. Bettye Collier-Thomas and V. P. Franklin (New York, 2001), 139–70; Kay Mills, *This Little Light of Mine: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer* (New York, 1993).
[26]"Citizenship Curriculum," subgroup d, appendix a, reel 67.340,834, SNCC Papers; "Summary of Freedom School Curriculum," SNCC Papers, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Atlanta, GA (hereafter, SNCC Papers, King Center).
[27]Adickes, *Legacy of a Freedom School*, 34–39; Rothschild, "The Volunteers and the Freedom Schools," 403.
[28]Ibid.
[29]Levine, *Freedom's Children*, 94.
[30]Homer Hill, phone interview with the author, 24 June 2008.
[31]Mitchell interview.
[32]These ideas were expressed in the newspapers produced by Freedom School students; see Sturkey, "I Want to Become Part of History," 358–368.
[33]On July 7, the target date for the first day of Freedom School, Staughton Lynd, the Freedom School coordinator, reported that twenty-five schools opened in twelve communities across the state with an estimated 1,500 students attending. By July 27, Lynd reported that forty-one Freedom Schools were in operation and 2,135 students were attending with 175 full-time teachers working in the schools. In late July the activists were recruiting 50–100 more teachers. The immediate success of the Freedom Schools, which had initially received little social value at the onset of Freedom Summer—was unexpected. For instance, Hattiesburg Freedom School coordinators expected to register seventy-five students. But on registration day, 600 students expressed interest in the

school. Hattiesburg was considered the "Mecca" of the Freedom Schools. Carolyn and Arthur Reese organized and ran five schools in the city with 675 students attending. Sutherland, *Letters from Mississippi*, 107; "Freedom Schools Mississippi" in *The Student Voice 1960–1965: Periodical of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee*, ed. Clayborne Carson (Westport, CT, 1990), 2–3; "Freedom School Data," box 4, folder 13, Staughton Lynd Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, WI (hereafter, Lynd Papers); Adickes, *Legacy of a Freedom School*, 103; "Freedom Schools, general," subgroup d, appendix a, reel 68.347.393, SNCC Papers; "Freedom Schools, Historical Data," subgroup d, appendix a, reel 68.352.0429, SNCC Papers; "Mississippi, Freedom Schools, Retrospect and Prospect," subgroup a, series xv, reel 38.112.338, SNCC Papers. Lynd reported the following Freedom School information broken down by congressional district. The first number is the number of schools, the second number is the number of students attending in each community: 1st congressional district—Columbus (2–60)—2nd congressional district—Clarksdale (4–60), Holmes County (3–105), Holly Springs (3–155), Greenville (2–35), Greenwood (2–60), Ruleville (2–50), Shaw (1–25)—3rd congressional district—Vicksburg (1–60), McComb (1–75)—4th congressional district—Canton (3–110) Rural Madison (5–225), Carthage (1–75), Meridian (1–150)—5th congressional district—Hattiesburg (5–675), Laurel (1–65), Moss point (1–40), Biloxi (1–35), Gulfport (3–75).

[34]Liz Fusco quoted in George Chilcoat and Jerry Ligon, "Discussion as a Means for Transformative Change," 214; Liz Fusco, "Deeper Than Politics: The Mississippi Freedom Schools," *Liberation* 9 (November 1964): 18.

[35]Larry Cuban, *How Teachers Taught: Constancy and Change in America's Classrooms, 1890–1990* (New York, 1993); Barry Franklin, *Building the American Community: The School Curriculum and the Search for Social Control* (London, 1986); John Holt, *How Children Fail* (New York, 1964); Jonathan Kozol, *Death at an Early* Age (New York, 1976); Joel Spring, *The Sorting Machine Revisited: National Educational Policy Since 1945* (New York, 1989).

[36]"Basic Set of Questions, Citizenship Curriculum," subgroup d, appendix a, reel 67.340,834, SNCC Papers.

[37]Chilcoat and Ligon, "Theatre as an Emancipatory Tool," 515–543.

[38]Chilcoat and Ligon, "Discussion as a Means for Transformative Change," 215.

[39]Wally Roberts, phone interview with author, 23 June 2008; Wally Roberts, "Teaching Freedom," in possession of author; see also website: www.crmvet.org.

[40]Hymethia Washington Thompson, phone interview with the author, 26 August 2008. For an analysis of the role of nonviolent tactics in the movement, see Dennis Chong, *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chicago, IL, 1991); Joseph E. Luders, *The Civil Rights Movement and the Logic of Social Change* (Cambridge, MA, 2010).

[41]Dittmer, *Local People*, 333; Adickes, *Legacy of a Freedom School,* 89–93; "City Library Open to Card Holders," *Hattiesburg American*, 9 September 1964; "Public Library Will Reopen Here Wednesday," *Hattiesburg American*, 8 September 1964.

[42]Wally Roberts, phone interview with author, 23 June 2008.

[43]Dittmer, *Local People*, 333.

[44]Eddie James Carthan, interview with the author, 5 September 2008, Tchula, MS; Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, 255–256.

[45]"Freedom Schools," subgroup d, appendix a, reel 67, file 325, SNCC Papers.

[45]"Freedom Schools, Clarksdale," subgroup d, appendix a, reel 67, file 329, SNCC Papers.

[47]Dr. Young interview.

[48]Watkins interview.

[49]Sturkey, "'I Want to Become a Part of History,'" 358–363; "Freedom Schools, Fusco, Liz," subgroup d, appendix a, reel 68.346.0045, SNCC Papers.

[50]Arelya Mitchell, phone interview with the author, 2 September 2008.

[51]Levine, *Freedom's Children*, 96–101.

[52]Ibid., 101.

[53]McAdam, *Freedom Summer*, 41.

[54]Roberts interview.

[55]Sandy Siegel, phone interview with the author, 16 June 2008.

[56]Carson, *In Struggle,* 111–154; Dittmer, *Local People,* 272–337; McAdam, *Freedom Summer*, 77–83.

[57]"Johnson May Speak Today," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 6 June 1964; "Legislature Coming Back," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 7 June 1964; "Lawmakers Head Home; Will Return on June 17," *The Clarion Ledger*, 8 June 1964; "Appeal in School Case Won't Stop Integration," *The Clarion Ledger,* 8 July 1964; "Biloxi to Join Court

Appeal," *The Clarion-Ledger,* 9 July 1964; *Laws of the State of Mississippi, 1964*, p. 5. For a full account of desegregation in Mississippi, see Charles C. Bolton, *The Hardest Deal of All: The Battle Over School Integration in Mississippi, 1879–1980* (Jackson, MS, 2005).

[58]Florence Howe, "Mississippi's Freedom Schools: The Politics of Education," *Harvard Educational Review* 35 (1965), 155–156.

[59]"19 Negroes Apply at Canton High," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 4 September 1964; "18 Negroes Seeking Transfer to Canton," *Hattiesburg American,* 3 September 1964; "Meridian Leaders Take Legal Action," *Hattiesburg American*, 4 September 1964; "Integration Sought By Meridian Group," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 5 September 1964; "Canton, Summit Integration Attempts Are Turned Back," *The Clarion-Ledger*, 9 September 1964; "Canton School Turns Back Negro Pupils," *Clarksdale Press Register*, 8 September 1964; "High Schools in Jackson Bar Negroes," *Clarksdale Press Register*, 10 September 1964.

[60]Thompson interview.

[61]Watkins interview.

[62]Rothschild, *A Case of Black and White*, 110–115; "Issaquena M.S.U. Freedom Fighter, August, 1965," Mississippi Student Union folder, FIS.

[63]"Massive School Boycott in Indianola, COFO news release, Freedom Schools," miscellaneous folder, FIS.

[64]Dittmer, *Local People*, 332; "Massive School Boycott in Indianola, Press Release, 22 February 1965," FIS; "The Mississippi Student Union Convention—December 1964," miscellaneous folder, FIS; "Freedom Fighter: Issaquena MSU," Mississippi Student Union folder, FIS.

[65]Watkins interview.

[66]Dr. Young interview.

[67]The Tchula Seven were involved in an incident in Mississippi in which Eddie Carthan, who was mayor, was arrested on fabricated charges, instigated in the white community. The movement to free him was an international affair and several celebrities joined the cause. Carthan was later invited to a United Nations meeting where he met Yassar Arafat and Nelson Mandela.

[68]Ida Ruth Griffin O'Leary, phone interview with the author, 4 September 2008.

[69]Ibid. Educational researchers and scholars have emphasized the social justice aspects of the Freedom Schools and made recommendations on how they can serve as a model for improving public education today and deal with the high levels of underachievement, particularly in urban public schools. See Ronald Batchelor and V. P. Franklin, "Freedom Schooling: A New Approach to Federal-Local Cooperation in Public Education," *Teachers College Record* 80 (December 1978): 225–248; Robert Moses and Charles E. Cobb, Jr., *Radical Equations: Math Literacy and Civil Rights* (Boston, MA, 2001); and Robert Moses, "An Earned Insurgency: Quality Education as a Constitutional Right," *Harvard Educational Review* 79 (Summer 2009): 370–381.

[70]Children's Defense Fund website: http://www.childrensdefense.org/cdf-freedom-schools. See also Steve Otfinoski, *Marian Wright Edelman: Defender of Children's Rights* (Woodbridge, CT, 1991); Marian Wright Edelman, *Lanterns: A Memoir of Mentors* (Boston, MA, 1999); Marian Wright Edelman, *The Measure of Our Success: A Letter to My Children and Yours* (Boston, MA, 1992); Kay Mills, *Something Better for My Children: The History and People of Head Start* (New York, 1998); Polly Greenberg, *The Devil Has Slippery Shoes: A Biased Biography of the Child Development Group of Mississippi* (Washington DC, 1990); Maris A. Vinovskis, *The Birth of Head Start: Preschool Education Policies in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations* (Chicago, IL, 2005); Edward Zigler and Susan Muenchow, *Head Start: The Inside Story of America's Most Successful Educational Experiment* (New York, 1992). The connection between Freedom Schools and Head Start is complex and illustrative of how the freedom movement changed schooling during the course of the 1960s.

[71]Schools that are strongly connected to the principles of the 1964 Freedom Schools include, and are certainly not limited to, the Philadelphia Freedom Schools; the Chicago Freedom School; and Paulo Freire Freedom School in Tucson, Arizona. In Michigan the Black Radical Congress in Detroit decided to launch a campaign to create a model based on the Freedom Schools. A related concept was adopted by the Mohawk community which established the Akwesasne Freedom School.

[72]Thompson interview.

[73]Ibid.

[74]Carthan interview.

[75]Hill interview.